



Communication: Getting the Word Out about Customer Training

Know Your Community

Exercise for Marketing Teams

Make a list of seven to ten organizations (clubs, agencies, groups, businesses, etc.) that are potential library partners or represent potential library customers in the target audience for the training. Give special considerations to organizations that serve customers who are unserved or underserved by the library. Use your local newspaper, telephone directory, other local directories, or other appropriate resources for this assignment. Be sure to follow instructions (below) for each of the organizations you list here:

List of Organizations

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

For each of the organizations you listed above, provide the following information:

- Name, address and telephone number for a contact person in the organization.
- Connection between *Smart Investing @ your library® Builds Nebraska Communities* library services and products and benefit to their organization.
- Possible activities that would communicate—or market—the library's services and products to the organization. (For example, offsite demonstrations or training, speaking engagements, etc.)
- How would an association with this organization benefit the library?

Know Your Library

Exercise for Marketing Teams

You all know your own library pretty well, don't you? Even those of us who have worked in our libraries for a very long time can sometimes learn something new by taking a systematic look at it. Select one (or more) of the following exercises:

Guided Visualization

Try to approach this with a fresh eye. Pretend that you are a member of your target group, a person with no experience with the library. Put yourself in their shoes and record your observations as you walk up the sidewalk to the library, through the door and all through the library. Start at the street or in the parking lot. Notice the exterior signage and condition of your library. How are customers greeted when they enter the library? Is the library arrangement convenient, easily accessible? Is your library signage easy to read? Is it easy to spot library staff? Are the staff members approachable? What barriers to the library's staff and materials do library users face?

Photo Safari and Analysis

One way to really get to know your library is to try to see it through the eyes of a stranger by studying photographs of your library. Work with your team to take photographs of your library. Take the photographs from the point of view of the customer. Go outside and enter the library through the door that your customers use. Try to look at everything you see with fresh eyes and take pictures from the perspective of someone who has never been in the library before. As much as possible, it is important to analyze the photos from the point of view of someone who is not familiar with the library. Try to involve individuals who are not current library customers in this analysis.

Mystery customers

Involve others in this assessment. Involve some of the folks you identified earlier and if possible, involve people who represent the target group. Ask them to “mystery shop” the library. Ask them to critique your library photos.

What's the point of these exercises?

- Assess the curriculum and the collection as to how they will meet the needs of the target audience.
- Determine what you need to learn to sell the product (training and resources) to the target audience.

Merchandising in the Library

What is merchandising?

Merchandising is a systematic process of effectively positioning, presenting, and displaying library products and services (books, magazines, cds, talking books, videos, audio, computer access, etc.) in the traffic-way, at the point of purchase, or the point of use. It is the organization of the library—how you place materials to best serve your specific customers, how you organize your library to make it easy to find what they need.

What are the goals of merchandising?

Cut through the clutter—customers are bombarded by visual clutter.

Ease customer negotiation.

Save customer time.

Save customer embarrassment (“in-group” vs. “out-group”).

Move the product.

Hints for Library Merchandising

- Remember that merchandising is visual communication. It is not about personal taste or style. It is about following the principles of simple, clear graphic communication.
- Use bold graphics with large, crisp type. **Sans serif** type is best. Make it big and then double the size.
- Avoid all caps.
- Avoid acronyms and library jargon.
- Avoid visual clutter, the “bulletin board” look of many little items/elements clustered.
- Avoid italics, except for a single word here and there for emphasis.
- Imitate bookstores. You can copy their displays and signage. We strongly suggest “topic-specific” signs on top of shelving that holds your financial education materials.
- Beware the temptation of too many props. Edit. Use a few props and photographs (or enlarged book covers) as backdrop and then stack up the books (face-out) with a note (call-to-action) that says:

**Take these books.
Check them out now.
Tell your friends.**

- Take advantage of impulse pick-up.
- Change displays every month or more often.
- Cover all surfaces as much as possible, increasing merchandise intensity.
- Use cross-merchandising. For example, a financial education display featuring books, magazines, videos, cds, free copies of brochures, training registration sheets, and printouts of our **NebraskaAccess** list of **Money and Investing** Internet sites (nebraskaccess.ne.gov/moneyandinvesting.asp).
- Think of each of your library departments as a shop within a store. Use visual cues to direct people to the shop within a store. Copy the way department stores do this. Use the flooring, walls, flags, signs, etc.
- Good merchandising moves goods quickly. Consider it a success if you have to keep replenishing it!
- Check out Republican Valley Library System Director Denise Harders Pinterest Board for displays related to finance and money at <http://www.pinterest.com/repvalley/displays-about-finance/>. She will continue to add to it. Please share photos of your merchandising efforts so the Pinterest Board continues to grow.